

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 25 September 2023

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Petition: Introduction of a lorry route network

Purpose: To consider the request to introduce a lorry routing network similar to that as outlined in West Sussex County Council's Local Transport Plan 2022 – 2036, so that heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) are redirected away from narrow local roads in our villages

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to advise the petitioners:

- (1) That the existing freight routing network will be reviewed as part of a new East Sussex Freight Strategy which will form part of the County's fourth Local Transport Plan; and**
 - (2) That a route study of the B2192 from Earwig Corner to the A265 at Cross in Hand, undertaken in 2021, has identified a package of measures which, if implemented, will seek to encourage those driving through Ringmer village to do so more sensitively.**
-

1 Background Information

1.1. A petition containing 400 signatures was submitted to Full Council on 21 March 2023 calling for the introduction of a lorry route network in East Sussex, similar to that of West Sussex County Council (WSCC), so that Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) are redirected away from narrow local roads in our villages.

1.2. The principal issues raised in the petition referred to damage to property/vibrations, safety of non-motorised users, road surface/quality and speeding and the issue of noise arising from HGVs. Whilst most comments made as part of the petition related to freight movements through Ringmer, other locations mentioned include the C7 (Lewes – Newhaven), Firle, Newhaven, Ditchling, Glynde, Barcombe and South Chailey.

1.3. A copy of the petition is available in the Members' Room. Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee or Lead Member and a spokesperson for the petitioners is invited to address the Committee. The Chairman has referred this petition to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

2 Supporting Information

East Sussex County Council's approach to road freight

2.1 The current approach and policy to (road) freight in East Sussex is set out in the County's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) adopted in 2011 and 'Control of Heavy Goods Vehicles' policy [PS4/5](#) (see Appendix 1). LTP3 and the policy advise that as so few roads in the County are really suitable for HGVs, it is expected that the "A" and "B" roads in the county should be available to carry heavy lorries thereby allowing them to disperse over the available road network rather than to concentrate them on selected roads. LTP3 also elaborates on opportunities to 'support the transfer of freight by rail', 'work with Ordnance Survey and the freight industry to help address inappropriate use of routes identified by satellite navigation systems' and 'encourage more sustainably accessible locations for new business premises', ESCC have introduced restrictions on a small number of especially unsuitable roads across the County with the aim of improving the environment for residents and other users. Unless there is a specific structure along a route (for example, a bridge with a weight restriction), the Council are only able to implement these restrictions to HGVs using the route by way of a Traffic Regulation Order. In considering a potential prohibition for HGV movements, the following issues are taken into account:

- Is there a more suitable alternative route available?
- Can this route be adequately signed?

- What level of enforcement is available by the Police who have to follow the offending vehicle through the entry and terminal point of the restriction in order to enforce?
- What is the real extent of the problem – where is the evidence to support the claims of increased HGV use?
- How many of these HGVs would be impacted by a prohibition (origin/destination or number plate surveys would be required for each road under consideration)?
- What are the economic impacts – how would any prohibition affect local businesses which form part of our rural economy?
- What is the environmental impact of additional signage (i.e. assessing that it is not contributing to over-provision of signage and considering the impact of the sign in terms of its size, placement and lighting) the cost of implementing the necessary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), and the whole life cost of maintaining the signs both at the restriction as well as the alternative route signing?

2.2 However, HGVs are still able to use these roads where HGV restrictions are in place for legitimate access reasons, for example deliveries to residential properties, removals and access to local businesses.

Freight movements in East Sussex

2.3 A combination of factors has, in recent years, increased the number of light and heavy goods vehicles on some roads on the network, with these factors not unique to the County, including:

- many rural farms/premises now being used for commercial and leisure purposes as part of the diversification of the local economy, which result in increased HGV movements at these sites;
- the use of in-vehicle Satellite Navigation (satnav) systems or mobile phone mapping often misdirecting HGV drivers down unsuitable routes;
- centralised deliveries by many businesses, resulting in one large HGV making many deliveries across a wide area instead of smaller commercial vehicles delivering from local depots, and
- movement to e-commerce increasing the level of online orders and deliveries, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic.

West Sussex County Council's Lorry Route Network

2.4 The petition requested that the County Council adopt a freight routing network similar to that of WSCC. Whilst West Sussex's Local Transport Plan (2022-2033) does not include a thematic Freight Strategy, it includes a section on freight which highlights constraints similar to East Sussex as set out in section 2.1 of the report, and a lorry route network map (see Appendix 3). There is an expectation that lorries in West Sussex will use the recommended freight routes, except for when local access is required, and using all other roads must be in accordance with traffic signing.

2.5 The main difference between the WSCC and ESCC approach regarding freight routing is that West Sussex recommends use of A roads only in their freight routing network, whereas the County Council recommends both A and B roads. As outlined above, this is due to so few roads in the County being suitable to carry HGVs in comparison to West Sussex's network.

Local Transport Plan 4 – review of Freight Strategy

2.6 The County Council is currently developing the County's fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP), which will be subject to public consultation later this year ahead of adoption in spring 2024. Alongside this process the Council will be developing a Freight Strategy during 2023/24, as a supporting document to the LTP. However, this will be available for consultation separate to the LTP, with the timescales for this to be determined. The development of the Strategy will need to consider whether amendments are necessary to the current approach to freight routing which promotes the use of A and B class roads and the policy PS 4/5 (Appendix 1) controlling HGVs on the network in the context of the need for the decarbonisation of transport and the opportunities for the safer and sustainable movement of freight.

Freight movements in Ringmer

2.7 As highlighted in section 1.2, the majority of the comments received in the petition related to freight movements in Ringmer. Ringmer is situated on the B2192 and therefore under the Council's current approach to freight routing, HGVs are able to use and traverse through the village.

Assessment of traffic and HGV flows

2.8 A detailed assessment regarding traffic movements in / around Ringmer, is outlined in Appendix 2. This has included a review of automatic traffic counter (ATC) surveys during 2019 and 2022 and using a five-day average flow to look at traffic and HGV flows through Ringmer and identify any trends. The ATCs are continually counting traffic and some of the counters include vehicle classifications. Whilst the Council recognises that there are also one-off video surveys, these are less comparable (only 12 hours) and have fewer classification groups. Therefore, to ensure that the report is underpinned by robust and comparable data Officers have referred to only the data collected from relevant ATC sites.

2.9 The key issues identified are:

- in relation to the data from the ATC sites reviewed the overall traffic flows in East Sussex (including HGV flows) are lower post-pandemic compared to pre-pandemic.
- there has been a reduction in the total flow and number of HGVs on the B2192 west of Ringmer (Site A43 Earwig Corner to New Road, Ringmer).
- there are approximately 408 HGV movements a day on the B2192 west of Ringmer (between Earwig Corner and New Road). This equates to approximately one HGV every 3.5 minutes.
- on the B2192 west of Ringmer (Site A43 Earwig Corner to New Road, Ringmer) there is a decrease of 3% in HGV flows.
- the site (site A43) between Earwig Corner and Ringmer saw an increase in HGVs as a percentage of total flow (+0.2 percentage points). The increase is due to a larger fall in other vehicle classes (e.g. cars), resulting in HGVs now making up a larger percentage of vehicles on the B2192.
- HGV movements at comparable villages and towns in East Sussex (Udimore Road, Rye, C7 – Swanborough), which have B roads running through them - have been considered. Data shows that there are some locations where HGV flows have increased and others where this has decreased.

Vehicle speeds

2.10 The petition also identified vehicle speeds through Ringmer as being high. Two speed surveys were undertaken in November 2022 on the B2192, one west (site A6092) of Kings Academy and the other to the east (site A6093). Average speeds at the site to the east were 29mph and 25mph at the site to the west albeit speeds by vehicle classification are not available. However, from the data available there is not considered to be any particular risk associated with vehicle speeds on this stretch of road.

Route Study on the B2192

2.12 The B2192 between A26 at Earwig Corner and A267 at Cross in Hand was identified for a Strategic Casualty Reduction (SCR) study, with this being undertaken in 2021. Due to the length of the route, the works order has been split into two phases:

- Phase 1 - A26 at Earwig Corner to A22 at Halland, which includes Ringmer, and
- Phase 2 – A22 at Halland to A267 at Cross In Hand.

2.13 Improvements have been identified including traffic signs and road markings to help drivers better understand the road alignment and hazards along the route in order to adjust their behaviour accordingly. The cost estimates for the delivery of these schemes are currently being developed. However, the schemes will be subject to a prioritisation against other Strategic Casualty Reduction studies identified specifically in consideration of the availability of funding and number of personal injury crashes on each route. The prioritisation will be undertaken during the remainder of 2023/24.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The current approach for the freight routing network in East Sussex is that as so few roads in the County are really suitable for HGVs, it is expected that the “A” and “B” roads should be available to carry heavy lorries thereby allowing them to disperse over the available road network rather than to concentrate them on selected roads. As the road through Ringmer is a B class road (B2192), heavy goods vehicles using this route are complying with existing policy.

3.2 The petition cites that the County Council should adopt a similar lorry route network approach to West Sussex, which encourages all HGV movements to be undertaken on A roads apart from access only, and that local access trips using all other roads must be made in accordance with traffic signing and these roads should be avoided as far as possible. The County Council is currently reviewing their Local Transport Plan, which will include the development of a Freight Strategy. It is recommended that

the petitioners are advised that as part of the development of the Freight Strategy the Council will be considering whether any amendments are necessary to the freight routing network for the county and policy, PS4/5, for the control of heavy goods vehicles.

3.3 In addition, it is also recommended to advise the petitioners that a route study for the B2192 has identified a package of measures which, if implemented, will seek to encourage those driving through Ringmer village to do so more sensitively.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Tessa Sweet-Escott

Tel. No. 07701 394 463

Email: tessa.sweet-escott@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Johnny Denis and All Members

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[East Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan 3](#)

[West Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan 2022-2036](#)